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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/837,341	04/19/2001	Koichi Matsuda	206230US6	8554

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ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

BROWN, JAMES LEE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2144

DATE MAILED: 09/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/837,341

Applicant(s)

MATSUDA, KOICHI

Examiner

James Brown

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 June 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 19 April 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Application 09/837341, filed 04/19/2001 has been examined.
2. Paper #6, First Action Status Request, received 06/25/2004, has been entered into record.
3. Claims 1-5 are pending.

Priority

4. Claim to foreign priority, Japan 2000-121694 application, filed 04/21/2000 has been made in this application.
5. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.
6. The effective filing date for the subject matter defined in the pending claims in this application is 04/21/2000.

Drawings

7. The Examiner contends that the drawings submitted on 04/19/2001 are acceptable for examination proceedings.

Specification

8. The disclosure is objected to because it contains an embedded hyperlink and/or other form of browser-executable code. Applicant is required to delete all embedded hyperlinks and/or other forms of browser-executable code. See page 17, line 3 for an example. See MPEP § 608.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

10. Claims 1, 4, and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Grayson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,963,217), hereinafter referred to as Grayson. Grayson discloses a method and computer program media that uses information processing apparatus that anticipates the present invention as broadly claimed.

11. As to claim 1, Grayson discloses information processing apparatus comprising:

inputting means for allowing a user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of said user (Col. 8, lines 29-41)

transmitting means for transmitting said strings of characters input through said inputting means to said server as character data(col. 2, lines 46-64)(Col. 3, lines 14-26);

converting means for converting said character data coming from said server into audio data(Col. 3, lines 14-26);

and outputting means for audibly outputting said audio data converted by said converting means(Col. 3, lines 14-26)(Col. 4, lines 52-58).

12. As to claim 4, information processing method comprising the steps of:

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allowing a user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of said user (Col. 2, lines 29-41);

transmitting said strings of characters input in said inputting step to said server as character data (col. 2, lines 46-64)(Col. 3, lines 14-26);

converting said character data coming from said server into audio data (Col. 3, lines 14-26);

and audibly outputting said audio data converted in said converting step (Col. 3, lines 14-26)(Col. 4, lines 52-58).

13. As to claim 5, the program comprising the steps of:

allowing a user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of said user (Col. 2, lines 29-41);

transmitting said strings of characters input in said inputting step to said server as character data (col. 2, lines 46-64)(Col. 3, lines 14-26);

converting said character data coming from said server into audio data (Col. 3, lines 14-26);

and audibly outputting said audio data converted in said converting step (Col. 3, lines 14-26)(Col. 4, lines 52-58).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

14. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

15. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Grayson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,963,217), hereinafter referred to as Grayson, in view of Gemmell et al. (U.K. Patent Appl. No. GB2128786A), hereinafter referred to as Gemmell.

16. In regards to claim 2, Grayson disclosed information processing apparatus comprising:

inputting means for allowing a user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of said user ;

transmitting means for transmitting said strings of characters input through said inputting means to said server as character data;

converting means for converting said character data coming from said server into audio data;

and outputting means for audibly outputting said audio data converted by said converting means.

17. Grayson did not expressly disclose converting means that includes:

correspondence table storing means for storing a correspondence table in which character data are made to correspond with audio data;

and processing means for referencing said correspondence table storing means so as to convert character data transmitted from said server into the corresponding audio data.

18. Gemmell teaches an information processing apparatus that uses dictionaries (correspondence tables) to map character data to audio data. Subsequently, the audio

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data is converted to audio output utterance by means of a text to speech synthesizer.

(Page 2, lines 13-22)

19. At the time the invention was made it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to use correspondence tables (dictionaries) for storing and converting text input to audio data output. Prior to the time of invention, the technique of using correspondence (data/map/phoneme/dictionary) tables to provide a correlation between character input and audio output utterance had been well known and practiced in the art. One skilled in the art would have desired to use established techniques to improve performance and reliability. (Page 1, lines 9-18 and page 2, lines 13-22)

20. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Grayson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,963,217) as applied to claims 1, and 2 above, further in view of Sugiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,345,245 B1), hereinafter referred to as Sugiyama .

21. Grayson disclosed information processing apparatus comprising:

inputting means for allowing a user to input strings of characters constituting a chat carried on via an avatar which is active in said shared virtual space as an incarnation of said user ;

transmitting means for transmitting said strings of characters input through said inputting means to said server as character data;

converting means for converting said character data coming from said server into audio data;

and outputting means for audibly outputting said audio data converted by said converting means.

22. Grayson did not expressly disclose

correspondence table updating means which, in response to a query from said server, transmits to said server an ID representing a type of said correspondence table stored in said correspondence table storing means, wherein, if said server returns an updated correspondence table in response to said ID transmitted thereto, then said correspondence table updating means stores said updated correspondence table into said correspondence table storing means.

23. Sugiyama disclosed a method and computer program media that uses information processing apparatus that meets the functional limitations of claim 3 as summarized below.

Sugiyama transmits a "local user dictionary tag" identifying the local dictionary/correspondence table in response to a query from the common dictionary manager (server). Sugiyama's common dictionary (correspondence table) manager performs a comparison test against the local dictionary (correspondence table) and transmits appropriate edits (updates) to the corresponding "local user dictionary tag" if mismatched. (Col 6 line 1 through Col. 7, line 12)

24. At the time of invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Grayson with Sugiyama to obtain an automated and flexible means of managing dictionaries (correspondence tables) on a plurality of information processing apparatus.

Conclusion


25. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.
26. Merrick et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,433,784) disclosed dictionary tables with character text to voice.
27. Luther (U.S. Pat. No. 5,500,919) disclosed text to speech processing using tables.
28. Matsuda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,292,198) disclosed text to speech processing and avatar in Virtual Reality environment.
29. Baker et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,210,689) disclosed text to speech processing techniques.
30. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James Brown whose telephone number is 571-272-3924. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:00AM-3:30PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William Cuchlinski can be reached on 571-272-3925. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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31. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

James Brown
Examiner
Art Unit 2144

jb



WILLIAM A. CUCHLINSKI, JR.
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